

VZCZCXRO0595
RR RUEHAST RUEHHM RUEHLN RUEHMA RUEHPB RUEHPOD RUEHTM RUEHTRO
DE RUEHAM #0829/01 0961339
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 061339Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4813
INFO RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 6218
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 0487
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH 0873
RUEHDOI/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC
RUEHRC/USDA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 000829

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ELA, NEA/RA, AND OES
STATE PASS USAID
EPA FOR INTERNATIONAL/MEDEARIS
USDA FOR FOREST SERVICE/INTERNATIONAL
INTERIOR FOR INTERNATIONAL/WASHBURN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SENV](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [UN](#) [IZ](#) [KU](#) [SA](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: UNCC-funded Badia Ecosystems Restoration Program Takes
Small Steps Forward

AMMAN 00000829 001.2 OF 002

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), through its Compensation Fund established to reimburse countries for losses and damages resulting from the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, awarded \$160 million to Jordan in 2005 for the Badia Ecosystems Restoration Program (BERP). Four years later, a new management team is in place in the Jordan UNCC office, a road-map for restoration has been developed, project proposals have been submitted for review, and there is an expectation that activities could soon begin to restore the ecosystems damaged from the influx of refugees and livestock resulting from the first Gulf war. Challenges, however, remain. The local community, dismayed by the lengthy project review process, will need convincing that activities will soon begin and USAID assesses the program as too narrowly defined to have a lasting impact. End summary.

¶2. (U) The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), a subsidiary organ of the United Nations Security Council, was created in 1991 to process claims and pay compensation for losses and damage suffered as a direct result of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Beneficiary countries include Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, all of which can seek compensation for loss of property, deaths, loss of natural resources, harm to public health, and environmental destruction. The UNCC awarded Jordan \$160 million in compensation in June 2005 to be used for the rehabilitation of its terrestrial ecosystem by revitalizing areas damaged by refugees and their livestock that fled to Jordan. Since 2005, Jordan has submitted to the UNCC several Monitoring and Assessment (M&A) studies addressing the depletion of groundwater as well as terrestrial, agricultural, and wetland resource damages. To date, no projects have begun.

¶3. (U) Under UNCC terms, any funded remediation/restoration project should be designed to restore rangeland and wildlife habitats to pre-crisis levels and implemented with the full cooperation and participation of the local community. Fund managers consider it essential to include the majority of stakeholders -- i.e. farmers, livestock producers, and herders -- in project development and implementation. For the Badia Ecosystems Restoration Program (BERP), community involvement requires flexibility in the means of communication with residents, whether through outreach to local governmental agencies or NGOs, and will vary depending on project scale and community size. In more remote areas with communities

averaging 250 people, communication will be managed in cooperation with tribal leaders and village councils.

¶4. (SBU) Director of the GOJ-established office to manage the fund and liaise with the UNCC, Dr. Abdel-Nabi Fardous, told ESTHOffs that Badia residents had become skeptical of the project and the UNCC process because implementation had been delayed during the initial funding negotiations. He reported that many proposals previously submitted did not adhere to UNCC guidelines, thus the holdup. Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) Director General Yehya Khaled elaborated, calling the process "analysis-paralysis," noting that the Badia area has long been neglected and suffered considerable environmental degradation after the first Gulf War. As a result, people have become tired of waiting for changes to be implemented. According to Fardous, many proposals were resubmitted to the reviewing committee in late December 2008, and the committee will soon make awards.

¶5. (U) To move forward, a strategic road-map has been developed for the BERP and includes a clear implementation method, deliverables, comprehensive work-plans, and sustainable production system plans associated with the restoration of targeted areas. The road-map further includes a preliminary demonstration phase of five to seven years to develop pilot projects. The restoration efforts will begin in five ecosystems identified as priorities because of their severely degraded ecosystems/landscapes. The targeted, diverse ecosystems represent some of the largest and flattest parts in Jordan where the vegetation is dominated by low shrubs and annual herbs and plants, representing important grazing areas for sheep and goats. These areas are threatened by the extension of rainfed farming (wheat and barley), but they have the highest recovery potential because of good soil properties and frequent floods. UNCC will directly monitor the funds identified for these projects as well as implementation to ensure appropriate resource allocation.

AMMAN 00000829 002.2 OF 002

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: Despite recent progress by the GOJ and UNCC, USAID concludes that, as conceived, the narrow focus of programs allowed by the UNCC program would not result in sustainable restoration of the Badia ecosystems. The program interventions are limited to subsidy of animal numbers and short-term compensation to herders. Furthermore, development of alternate long-term sources of income was not part of the approved program.

Visit Amman's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman>

BEECROFT